

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 18776 091903Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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R 091740Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1629

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 18776

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, PGOV

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT POMPIDOU'S PESSIMISTIC MOOD

1. SUMMARY. SEVERAL JOURNALISTS WHO MEET REGULARLY WITH PRESIDENT POMPIDOU HAVE RECENTLY REMARKED TO EMBASSY OFFICERS ON DIFFERENT OCCASIONS, BUT IN ALMOST IDENTICAL TERMS, THAT PRESIDENT'S CURRENT MOOD IS ONE OF DEEP PESSIMISM. POMPIDOU REPORTEDLY IS BROODING OVER MONETARY CRISIS, DISARRAY OF WESTERN CAMP AND FRENCH IMPOTENCE TO CHANGE SITUATION. HE IS SAID TO PORTRAY WESTERN EUROPE AS ON THE BRINK OF RAPID AND POSSIBLY BRUTAL
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PAGE 02 PARIS 18776 091903Z

SLIDE TOWARDS WHAT HE CHARACTERIZES AS "FINLANDIZATION."

END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, POMPIDOU SEES DOLLAR CRISIS AS GENERALLY DEBILITATING FOR WEST. IN ADDITION TO PROBLEMS DOLLAR WEAKNESS CREATES IN TRADE AREA, HE BELIEVES IT WILL GENERATE INTENSE US CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES TO REDUCE US FORCES IN EUROPE. THIS, PLUS WIDESPREAD BELIEF IN EUROPEAN CIRCLES THAT US AND USSR HAVE REACHED BILATERAL AGREEMENT WHICH PRECLUDES RESORT TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPEAN CONFLICT, CREATE GRAVE DOUBT ABOUT US WILLINGNESS TO DEFEND WESTERN EUROPE.

3. RATHER THAN STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN UNITY, POMPIDOU BELIEVES SITUATION IS CREATING "EVERY-MAN-FOR-HIMSELF PSYCHOLOGY" AMONG EUROPEAN NATIONS. THUS, HE PERCEIVES REAL DANGER THAT FRG MIGHT ADOPT A MORE NEUTRAL ROLE IN EXCHANGE FOR SOME PROGRESS TOWARDS REUNIFICATION. HE BELIEVES SOVIET UNION IS WELL AWARE OF WESTERN VULNERABILITY AND HAS EVERY INTENTION OF EXPLOITING IT, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES.

4. PARTICULARLY FRUSTRATING TO POMPIDOU IS THAT HE SEES NO EASY SOLUTION AND BELIEVES THAT GOF HAS LITTLE CONTROL OVER EVENTS. FRANCE CERTAINLY INTENDS TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN DEFENSE POSTURE AND POMPIDOU REPORTEDLY JUST APPROVED ENTIRE DEFENSE BUDGET FOR THE COMING YEAR. BUT THE PRESIDENT IS SAID TO BE KEENLY AWARE OF FRENCH INABILITY TO DO MUCH TO GUARANTEE EUROPEAN SECURITY.

5. COMMENT: AFTER JUNE 6 COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETING, GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN SAID POMPIDOU REGARDED CURRENT MONETARY SITUATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS AS EXTREMELY SERIOUS AND WOULD DISCUSS THEM IN MAJOR PUBLIC TELEVISION ADDRESS THIS FALL. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT PRESIDENT INSTRUCTED JOBERT TO TAKE CAUTIOUS APPROACH DURING RECENT HELSINKI MEETINGS, TO "WAKE PEOPLE UP TO WEST'S INSECURITY." THUS, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT POMPIDOU IS NOT OVERDRAWING HIS CONCERN ABOUT MONETARY CRISIS FOR TACTICAL PURPOSES BUT IS SERIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT MONETARY DISARRAY AND ITS POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON EUROPEAN SECURITY-- ESPECIALLY IN ACCELERATING MOVES TOWARD US FORCE REDUCTIONS.
IRWIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MONETARY REFORM, JOURNALISTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: thigpegh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PARIS18776
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P750007-2220
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730744/aaaabgnf.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: thigpegh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Aug-2001 by smithrj>; APPROVED <18-Oct-2001 by thigpegh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT POMPIDOU'S PESSIMISTIC MOOD
TAGS: EFIN, PGOV, FR, (POMPIDOU)
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005